

**Sara Eide - Iowa Catholic Conference remarks on SSB 1139,
February 14, 2023, 10:30 a.m., Rm 217,
UNDECIDED
Edler, Sweeney and Trone-Garriott**

On behalf of the Iowa Catholic Conference, we want to express concerns we have with Division 1 of this bill.

We believe pregnant women deserve more access to meaningful assistance and support when she needs it most. That is why we advocated for the creation of the MOMS program last year and why we are advocating for additional funding this year.

We believe \$2 million is a right amount to get the MOMS program started.

We are also very supportive of fatherhood initiatives and believe that having involved fathers is in the best interest of the child.

However, we're concerned that including the fatherhood initiatives to compete for the same \$2 million will result in pregnant women not getting the support they need which was the entire goal of the MOMS Act. Also, the MOMS Act was intentionally created to support only life-affirming organizations. The fatherhood initiatives are not restricted in this way and could allow for pro-abortion organizations to receive some (or all) of these funds.

We ask that the fatherhood initiatives be separated from the MOMS program with its own funding stream. We believe these programs complement each other but should not be forced to compete against each other.

We are grateful for the continued interest in supporting moms and maternal health. When faced with a crisis pregnancy, many women fear they won't be able to find needed social services, family support, and financial resources. The MOMS Act will support these mothers, their babies, and help stabilize their families.

Lastly, we believe access to health care is critical for new moms and would encourage the legislature to extend Medicaid post-partum coverage. Currently it only covers new moms for two months, and we believe moms should be covered for the first 12 months. We hope to see this in a future version of a bill.

Thank you.